

City of Northampton, MA
Transportation and Parking Commission

September 17, 2019

MEETING MINUTES

Submitted by: Beth A. Willard

1. Councilor Jim Nash called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and announced that there would be audio/video recording of this meeting.

Members present and absent/introductions:

Member	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Councilor Jim Nash, Chair	X	
Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra, Vice Chair	X	
Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director	X	
Jody Kasper, Chief of Police	Absent	
Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability	X	
David Pomerantz, Director of Central Services	X	
Debin Bruce, Citizen	X	
Gary Hartwell, Citizen	Absent	
Adam Novitt, Citizen	Absent	
Jami Albro-Fisher, Citizen	Absent	
Alan Verson, Planning Board	Absent	
Staff	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Nanci Forrestall, Parking Enforcement	X	
Maggie Chan, Traffic Engineer	X	
Beth A. Willard, DPW Clerk	X	

2. **Brief promotion of Pace Car Program**

- Councilor Nash said that participation in the program involves a pledge to drive the speed limit. The pledge can be found on line at the DPW website, and he encouraged everyone to sign.

3. **Public comment**

- Patty Gates spoke concerning the need for a crosswalk across Center Street at the intersection of Center Street and Masonic Street. There are issues concerning bump-outs and wheel chair ramps, as well as an existing driveway for 43 Center Street at that location;

- Jack Davey of Pleasant Journey Used Cars spoke concerning the stop signs on Fulton Avenue and traffic issues on that street related to NETA, both of which he felt were negatively impacting his business;
- Julie Harvey Park of 140 Crescent Street spoke concerning the crosswalk on Prospect Street from Round Hill Road to Stoddard Street. Traffic is heavy, and cars tend to speed. Stoddard Street is a popular access to the bikeway and the Stop & Shop plaza. The sidewalk on one side of Prospect Street ends at Round Hill Road, forcing pedestrians to cross there. There is a new business starting up in the Round Hill/Crescent Street neighborhood which will increase the traffic at this intersection. She feels that the City needs to improve safety there, and is collecting signatures on a letter which she will submit to Councilor Nash and the DPW. Councilor Dennis Bidwell has also contacted the Police Department for a report of incidents at that location.

4. Approval of minutes from the previous meeting

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To approve the minutes from the June 18, 2019 meeting.	Gina-Louise Sciarra	David Pomerantz	Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain, 0

5. Reports from departments and subcommittees/announcements/presentations

- Department of Public Works (DPW) Updates – Director Donna LaScaleia:
 - Roadway Improvement Projects
 - a. Burts Pit Road is substantially complete;
 - b. Cross Street and Main Street Leeds have the base down;
 - c. Chesterfield Road is scheduled for paving next week;
 - d. Glendale Road has the base down and is scheduled for paving next week;
 - e. The pavement marking contract was awarded to Hi-Way Safety Systems.
 - Clement Street Bridge
 - a. The bridge is expected to open shortly.
- Department of Planning and Sustainability Updates – Director Wayne Feiden:
 - The Burts Bog bike trail is almost complete. The binder coat should be installed October 1st, with a finish coat expected to be installed October 15th;
 - A block grant was received for 32 curb cuts:
 - a. The design is expected to be done this winter, and construction is expected to start in the spring;
 - The design for the bikeway off ramp at Edwards Square is nearly complete, with construction expected to start in the spring;
 - The new Conz Street bike share station is going out for bid now and it is expected to be added on hopefully this spring.

6. Matters before the Commission

- a. Discussion of Union Station parking changes
 - Item 6e was moved up to first position for discussion;
 - The Mayor explained that changes were primarily to unify the management of the parking lot, as there are issues concerning enforcement:
 - ❖ It is a private lot, and the City currently controls 75 spaces for daytime parking only;

- Under the proposed change, Union Station will manage the parking lot under a contract, and forward collected parking fees for City controlled spaces to the City:
 - ❖ Parking fees charged for City controlled spaces cannot exceed the highest parking fee charged by the City (currently \$1.00/hour);
 - ❖ 24 hour parking would be handled the same as it currently is done in the Parking Garage, just that it would be handled under the contract with Union Station;
 - ❖ Informal arrangements have been made in the past when extra parking was needed for special events, and this is expected to continue;
- The vendor being used by Union Station is the same vendor that is used by the Parking Garage;
- This would relieve the City of enforcement at that lot;
- A concern was raised about parking for residents of Live 155:
 - ❖ Union Station may leave a few spots for them;
 - ❖ There are a number of long term lots available in the area of Live 155.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 19.128 An Ordinance To amend Chapter 312 of the Code of Ordinances by amending Section 312-110 to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Gina-Louise Sciarra	Wayne Feiden	Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain, 0

- b. Discussion of proposed ordinances related to changes in parking in the downtown/Smith College area
- The Commission dealt with this issue in June and it was sent to the City Council with a positive recommendation;
 - It was decided that the best place for a public proposal review was in the Transportation and Parking Commission meeting;
 - The problem was that the Code Book did not match what actually exists on the streets in that area, and this will remedy the situation:
 - ❖ Lyn Simmons of the Mayor's office said that a group had been created about three years ago to discuss issues such as this:
 - The intent is to identify issues as they arise and get the information to the appropriate committee;
 - The group meets once a month to discuss logistics and other issues;
 - As the proposed ordinance had already been sent to City Council with a positive recommendation, no motion was necessary:
 - ❖ The proposed ordinance will be sent back to City Council.
- c. Discussion of Fulton Avenue stop signs
- The stop signs are currently installed on a temporary basis;
 - This ordinance will make them permanent;
 - A member of the public questioned if there ever were stop signs on Fulton Avenue:
 - ❖ Director LaScaleia thought not;
 - ❖ Placement began with a request from Police Chief Kasper;
 - ❖ The DPW checked the situation on Fulton Avenue and determined that stop signs were warranted;

- ❖ There are a number of areas around the city like this where growth happened quickly
- Councilor Sciarra asked Jack Davey of Pleasant Journey Used Cars if his traffic situation has improved with the temporary installation of the stop signs. Director Feiden also asked Mr. Davey if traffic had decreased as more marijuana retailers opened shop:
 - ❖ He replied neither had an impact, as police were stopping all traffic to Fulton Avenue and questioning the drivers as to their destination on the street;
 - ❖ Director Feiden saw two issues at play:
 - One is the stop signs installed, which seemed to be good;
 - The second was the issue of an operational decision on the part of the Police Department to restrict traffic;
 - ❖ Councilor Nash said that there had been discussion of making Fulton Avenue one way in one direction and Wright Avenue one way in the opposite direction:
 - He questioned whether they were two way streets or one way streets, and how that would affect the bigger picture on Pleasant Street;
 - Director LaScaleia said the ordinance could be adjusted to fit the circumstances in the future, if there was an effect to Pleasant Street.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 19.114 An Ordinance Relative To Stop Signs On Fulton Avenue to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Gina-Louise Sciarra	Jim Nash	Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain, 0

d. Discussion of Hampton Avenue stop signs

- Director LaScaleia noted that this was a location where there was no ordinance for the stop signs, but the signs were installed last year.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 19.XXX An Ordinance relative to Stop Signs on Hampton Avenue to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Wayne Feiden	Debin Bruce	Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain, 0

e. Discussion of Walnut Street stop sign

- As the item was not correct on the agenda, the item was tabled until the next meeting.

7. New Business

- There was no new business.

8. Adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Motion	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
Adjourn.	Gina-Louise Sciarra	David Pomerantz	Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain, 0